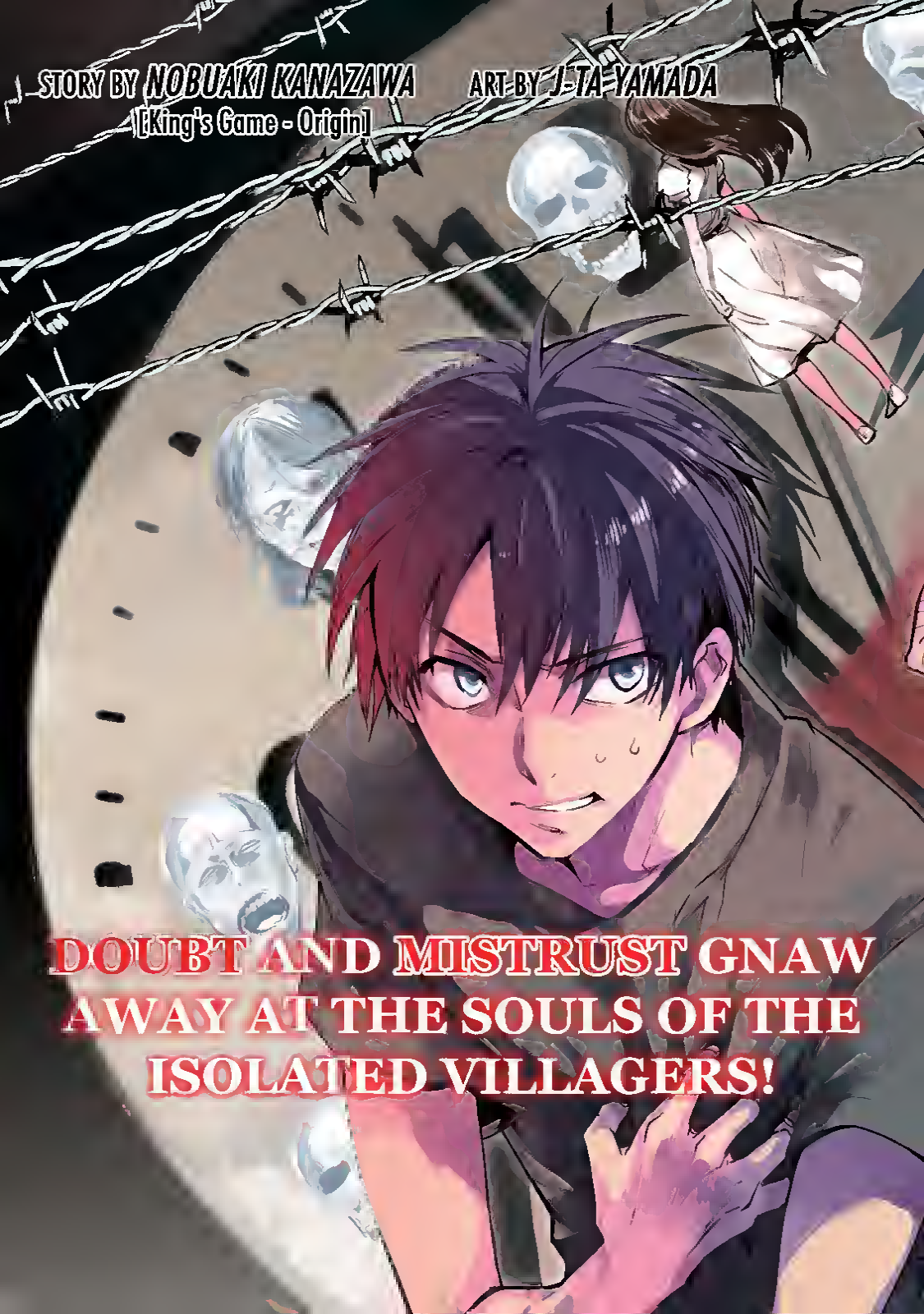
"LETTERS" THAT LEAVE US COWERING IN FEAR AND DROWNING IN DESPAIR!
CHAPTER 22
KING'S GAME
ORIGIN

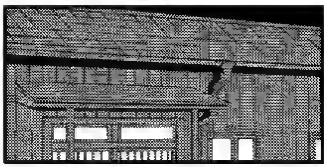

STORY BY NOBUAKI KANAZAWA
[King's Game - Origin]
ART BY J-TA YAMADA
DOUBT AND MISTRUST GNAW AWAY AT THE SOULS OF THE ISOLATED VILLAGERS!

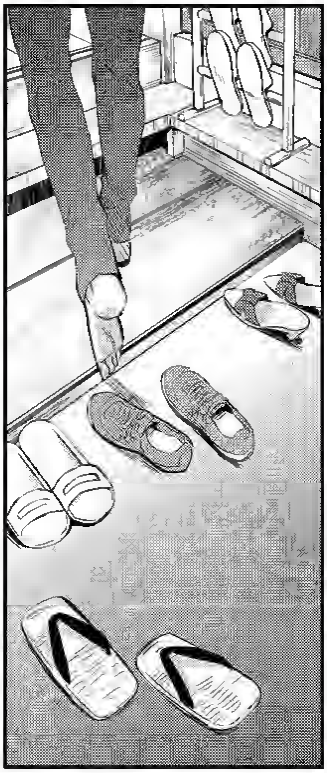
HALT!

FRIDAY AUGUST 19, 9:47 P.M.

I KNOW.
THERE'S BEEN ANOTHER VICTIM OF THE KING'S GAME.
I JUST CAME TO LET YOU KNOW.
KAZU-YA...
NAKAMURA KAZUYA.

I'LL INFORM MY SUPER-VISOR.
RETURN TO YOUR HOME.
UNDER-STOOD.
DID CHOOSING DEATH...
KAZU-YA...
IS THIS REALLY WHAT YOU WANTED?
...MAKE YOU HAPPY?





KAZUYA...

TELL ME,
KAZUYA...

WELCOME BACK.
YOU KNOW THE PHONES STILL WORK, RIGHT? YOU COULD'VE JUST CALLED THEM.
WHY DID YOU BOTHER HAND-DELIVERING THE BODY?
CREAK
CREAK
WHAT'S IT TO YOU?
...

EVERYONE LOOKS SO... RELIEVED.
IT'S BECAUSE KAZUYA TOOK THE HIT.
YUUJI AND RYUUJI. SURE, THEY'RE SAD ABOUT KAZUYA...
...BUT THEY'RE A LOT CALMER NOW.
SEE? EVERYONE PRIORITIZES THEIR OWN LIVES FIRST.

THINKING, "I HOPE SOMEONE ELSE RUNS OFF AND KILLS THEMSELVES.."
MAYBE NOT...
BUT NONE OF THEM EVER TOLD KAZUYA HE SHOULD COMMIT SUICIDE!
BUT THEY WERE THINKING IT.

WHEN I TOLD THEM...
..."KAZUYA HANGED HIMSELF"...
THEY LOOKED AT ME AS IF TO SAY, "I'M SURE YOU HAD SOMETHING TO DO WITH IT."
BUT...
NO ONE CONDEMNED ME.
YOU KNOW WHAT THAT MEANS, RIGHT?
RRGH...

THINK WHAT-EVER YOU WANT!
I'M GOING TO LOOK FOR NAT-SUKO—
GRAB
NO YOU'RE NOT.
WE DECIDED THAT EVERYONE'S GONNA STAY IN THE HALL TONIGHT.
WHAT? WHY?
THE COPS ARE GONE, WE'RE FREE TO DO AS WE PLEASE!

IT'S SO WE CAN FIGURE OUT WHO'S BEING CONTROLLED BY THE VIRUS.
ME...
THE ONLY VILLAGERS LEFT ARE...
YOU...
RYUUJI... FUMIKO-SAN...
AND SHUUHEI-SAN.
YUUJI...
MY DAD...

BUT HOW WILL WE KNOW WHERE TO FIND THE LETTER?
IF A LETTER COMES WHILE THE SEVEN OF US ARE HERE IN THE HALL...
...IT MEANS NONE OF US IS BEING CONTROLLED.
TODAY'S ORDER IS... OVER.
THE NEXT LETTER MIGHT ALREADY BE OUT THERE SOME-WHERE.
WELL, IF IT IS, THEN WE'RE OUT OF LUCK.

NOW THAT THE COPS ARE GONE, WE'VE GOTTA FIND THE LETTERS OURSELVES
IT'LL PROBABLY BE POSTED ON THE BULLETIN BOARD.
BUT IF IT'S NOT...
IF THE KING POSTS THEM UP THERE, WE'LL SEE THEM RIGHT AWAY.
REMEMBER, THE KING WANTS US TO FIND HIS LETTERS...
THIS IS THE KING'S GAME. ALL VILLAGERS
BY THE END OF THE DAY, WILL BE PUNISHED BY
...AND OBEY HIS ORDERS.

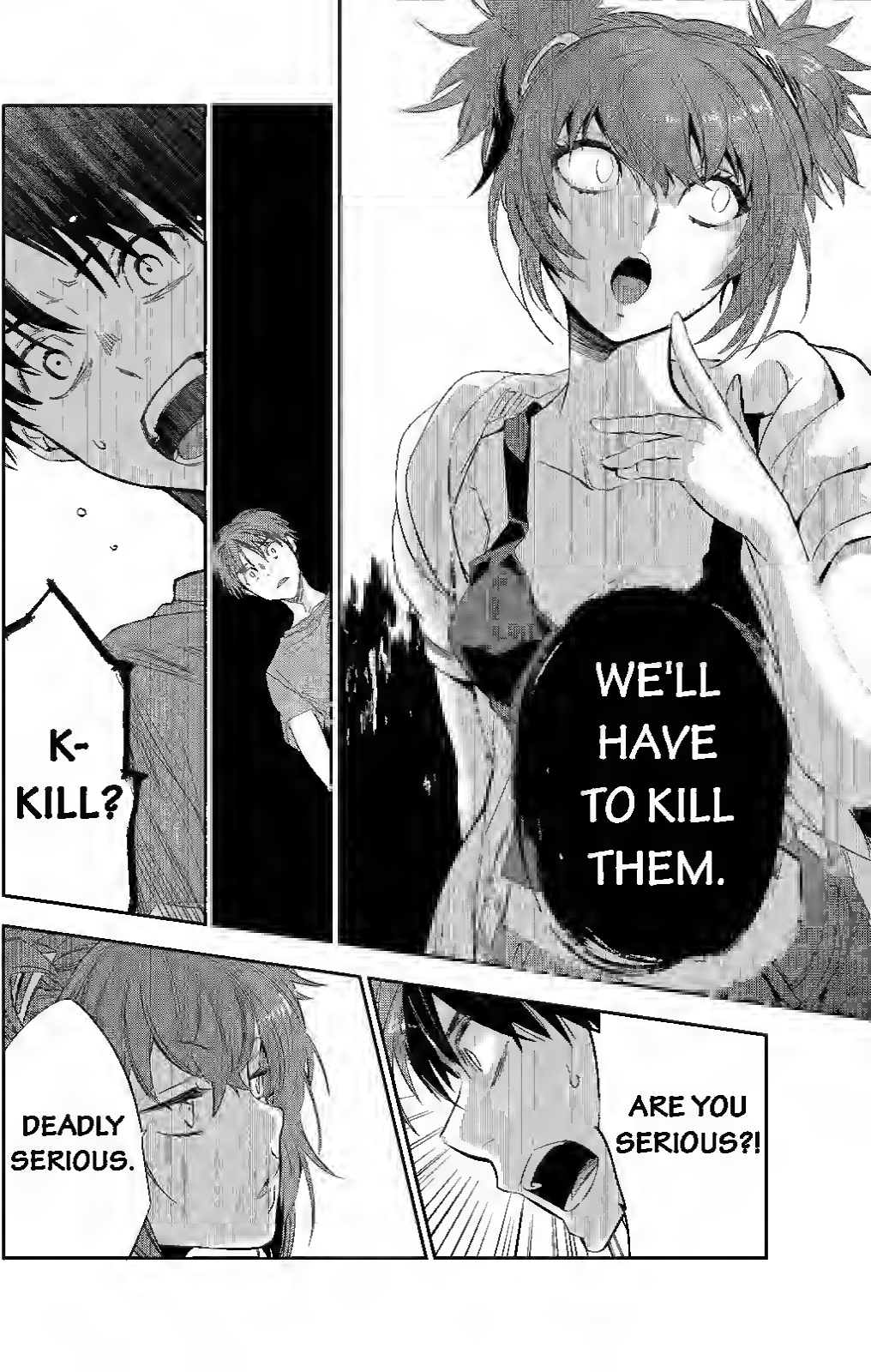
AND WE WERE WATCHING YOU FROM THE WINDOW, SO WE KNOW THAT YOU DIDN'T GO ANY-WHERE NEAR IT.
RYUUJI AND I RAN OVER TO TAKE A LOOK...
MEANING IF A LETTER WERE TO SHOW UP NOW...
...AND AS OF RIGHT NOW, THERE'S NOTHING THERE.
.. IT'D MEAN THE VIRUS IS CONTROLLING SOMEBODY ELSE OUT THERE.
WE'VE DECIDED ...
—SHOULDN'T YOU BE MORE CON-CERNED ABOUT SAVING YOUR OWN LIFE?
NATSU-KO'S DEAD. IN-STEAD OF WASTING YOUR ENERGY LOOKING FOR HER...
C'MON, KAZU-NARI.
—UNCOVERING THE KING IS OUR TOP PRIORITY.

KAZU-
NARI...
NATSUKO ISN'T DEAD!
THE FACT THAT SHE HASN'T MEANS ...
...THAT IT'S TIME TO GIVE UP.
I KNOW YOU STILL HAVE HOPE.
BUT IF NATSUKO WERE ALIVE, SHE'D HAVE COME RUNNING TO YOU BY NOW.

MAN, THERE'S STUB-BORN
AND THEN THERE'S YOU
NO!
NEVER!
NOT THAT I DON'T THINK IT'S ADORABLE

I'M FULLY AWARE THAT YOU AND I AREN'T EVER GONNA HAPPEN
RELAX, DON'T START YELLING ABOUT ME TRYING TO GET IN YOUR PANTS
I'M OVER IT
ANYWAYS.
IF YOU DON'T WANT US SUSPECTING YOU...

YOU'D BEST STAY WITH US.
AT LEAST UNTIL TOMORROW MORNING.
MI-CHIKO, IF...
IF WE DO FIGURE OUT WHO'S DOING IT...
...WHAT THEN?
WELL, THE COPS THEM-SELVES ADMIT THEY'RE USELESS, SO...


K-
KILL?
WE'LL HAVE TO KILL THEM.
DEADLY SERIOUS.
ARE YOU SERIOUS?!

YOU.
POKU
EVEN IF IT TURNS OUT TO BE...
YOU REALLY THINK THE VIRUS HAS BEEN CONTROLLING ME?
YOU HEARD MIYAZAWA-SAN.
THE VIRUS CONTROLS ITS HOST SUBCONSCIOUSLY.
WHOEVER IT IS WOULDN'T REMEMBER A THING.
MEANING IT COULD BE ANYONE.
SLIP

IF WE KILL THE KING'S LITTLE PUPPET...
FLICK
...THEN THE LETTERS STOP...
...AND THE GAME ENDS.

THE KING'S GAME WILL KILL US ALL...
...LONG BEFORE THEY FIGURE OUT A CURE.
MA—
MAYBE IT WOULD END THE GAME...
SHE'S LOST HER MIND.
BUT WHAT ABOUT THE VIRUS INSIDE OUR BODIES?
KILL THEM?
HOPEFULLY IT'LL BUY US SOME TIME. THAT'S THE OTHER GOAL.
—
BECAUSE AT THIS RATE...

AS LONG AS WE CAN PREVENT NEW ORDERS FROM COMING..
WE MAY NOT KNOW WHY THE VIRUS IS FORCING US TO PLAY THE KING'S GAME..
..NONE OF US HAVE TO DIE.
..BUT IT'S CLEAR IT'S NOT OUT TO KILL US DIRECTLY

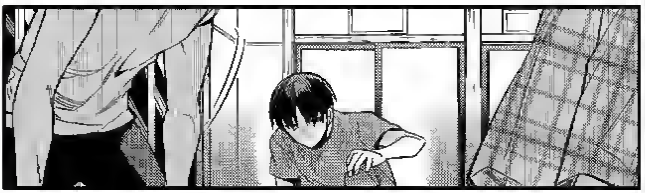
YOU WANNA MURDER SOMEONE..
...FOR THE SAKE OF BUYING SOME TIME?
FOR THE SAKE OF PROLONG-ING OUR LIVES.

NO...
NO.
NOT ON MY WATCH!
WHY DO WE HAVE TO KILL THEM?
WE CAN'T LET ANOTHER PERSON DIE JUST TO SAVE OURSELVES!
ESPE-CIALLY NOT AT OUR OWN HANDS!
HANDS...
WHY CAN'T WE JUST BIND THEIR HANDS?
THEN THEY CAN'T WRITE ANY-THING!
IF THEY CAN'T WRITE IT DOWN, THEY COULD JUST SAY IT OUT LOUD.
THE GOAL IS JUST TO TELL US THE ORDER.

I CAN'T TAKE ANOTHER PERSON DYING...
THEN YOU GAG THEM SO THE CAN'T SPEAK EITHER!
HRRMM...
...
CLEARLY WE'RE NOT SOLVING THIS NOW
WE'LL MAKE A FINAL DECISION WHEN WE FIND THEM
SMILE
AND KAZU-NARI...

IF YOU'RE SO CONVINCED YOUR PLAN WILL WORK...
YOU'D BETTER COOPERATE WHEN THE TIME COMES.

ALL RIGHT, LET'S CHECK THE BULLETIN BOARD.
EVERYONE COME WITH ME.
I DON'T WANNA DEAL WITH A BUNCH OF BULLSHIT IF I GO ALONE AND FIND A LETTER.



HANG ON, MICHIKO.
WHAT ABOUT ATSUSHI-SAN? HE'S PASSED OUT DRUNK ON THE FLOOR.
LEAVE MY DAD WHERE HE IS.
SNZNK
WHEN HE GETS LIKE THAT, AN EARTHQUAKE COULDN'T WAKE HIM.

SATURDAY AUGUST 20, 12:04 A.M.

IF THERE'S NO LETTER, IT MEANS THE KING IS IN THIS ROOM.
WHAT A MESS... AND HE'S THE OLDEST ADULT LEFT. IT MAKES ME SICK TO THINK WE'RE RELATED.
IF THERE IS A LETTER...
WELL, WELL, WELL...

LETTER: THIS IS THE KING'S GAME. ALL VILLAGERS ARE PARTICIPATING.